

TABLE II-1: Proposed Update to the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Merced River (Main Stem and South Fork)

SEGMENT NUMBER AND NAME	OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES (BY CATEGORY)
Main Stem Merced River	<p><i>Scientific</i> – These segments of the river corridor constitute a highly significant scientific resource because the watershed is largely within designated Wilderness in Yosemite National Park.</p>
1) Wilderness	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment includes views from the river and its banks of the glaciated river canyon, exposed bedrock riverbed, Merced Lake and Washburn Lake, the Bunnell Cascades, the confluence of tributaries, a large concentration of granite domes, and the Clark and Cathedral Ranges.</p> <p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment traverses a U-shaped, glacially carved canyon separated by cascades and soda springs below Washburn Lake.</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment provides outstanding opportunities for solitude along the river, with primitive and unconfined recreation. There is a spectrum of levels of recreational use. River-related recreational opportunities include day hiking, backpacking, horseback riding and packing, camping, and enjoyment of natural river sounds. Untrailed tributaries provide enhanced opportunities for solitude.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment includes a nearly full range of intact Sierran riverine environments, high-quality riparian, meadow, and aquatic habitats (such as the meadow at Washburn Lake), and special-status species such as mountain yellow-legged frog.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment includes portions of a prehistoric trans-Sierra route in use for thousands of years and many prehistoric sites. There are many historic resources such as homestead sites, trails, river crossings, High Sierra Camp sites, and structures.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – The segment is characterized by a free-flowing river and excellent water quality. The river gradient drops from 13,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation. There are examples of natural conditions, including glacial remnants, a logjam in Little Yosemite Valley that is hundreds of years old, and numerous cascades.</p>
2) Valley	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides magnificent views from the river and its banks of waterfalls (Nevada, Vernal, Illilouette, Yosemite, Sentinel, Ribbon, Bridalveil, and Silver Strand), rock cliffs (Half Dome, North Dome/Washington Column, Glacier Point, Yosemite Point/Lost Arrow Spire, Sentinel Rock, Three Brothers, Cathedral Rock, and El Capitan), and meadows (Stoneman, Ahwahnee, Cook's, Sentinel, Leidig, El Capitan, and Bridalveil). There is a scenic interface of river, rock, meadow, and forest throughout the segment.</p> <p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment contains a classic, glaciated, U-shaped valley, providing important examples of a mature meandering river; hanging valleys such as Yosemite and Bridalveil Creeks; and evidence of glaciation (e.g., moraines below El Capitan and Bridalveil Meadows).</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment offers opportunities to experience a spectrum of river-related recreational activities, from nature study and sightseeing to hiking. Yosemite Valley is one of the premier outdoor recreation areas in the world.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – Riparian areas and low-elevation meadows are the most productive communities in Yosemite Valley. The high quality and large extent of riparian, wetland, and other riverine areas provide rich habitat for a diversity of river-related species, including special-status species, neotropical migrant songbirds, and numerous bat species.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment contains evidence of thousands of years of human occupation reflected in a large number of archeological sites and continuing traditional use today. Nationally significant historic resources are found here, such as designed landscapes and developed areas, historic buildings, and circulation systems (trails, roads, and bridges) that provide visitor access to the sublime views of natural features that are culturally valuable.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment is characterized by a meandering river, world-renowned waterfalls, an active flood regime, oxbows, unique wetlands, and fluvial processes.</p>

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3a) Impoundment (would become part of Segment 3b, Gorge – classified as “scenic,” if Cascades Diversion Dam were removed)	<p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment contains the dramatic transition from the U-shaped, glaciated Yosemite Valley to the V-shaped river gorge.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment contains rich riparian habitat.</p>
3b) Gorge	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides views from the river and its banks of the Cascades, spectacular rapids among giant boulders, Wildcat Fall, Tamarack Creek Fall, the Rostrum, and Elephant Rock.</p> <p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment is characterized by a classic V-shaped river gorge with a continuous steep gradient.</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment provides a spectrum of river-related recreational opportunities, such as picnicking, fishing, photography, and sightseeing.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment is characterized by diverse riparian areas and associated special-status species that are largely intact and almost entirely undisturbed by humans.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment contains cultural resources, including prehistoric sites and historic sites and structures such as those relating to historic engineering projects.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment is characterized by exceptionally steep gradients (2,000-foot elevation drop in approximately six miles).</p>
4) El Portal	<p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment contains a transition from igneous to metasedimentary rocks (metasedimentary rocks are among the oldest in the Sierra Nevada).</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment provides a range of river-related recreational opportunities, in particular white-water rafting and kayaking (class III to V) and fishing.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment contains riverine habitats such as riparian woodlands and associated federal and state special-status species, including Tompkin’s sedge and Valley elderberry longhorn beetle and its critical habitat (elderberry shrub). Expanses of north-facing habitat allow unlimited access to the riparian zone for wildlife species.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment contains some of the oldest archeological sites in the Yosemite area, as well as many historic Indian villages and traditional gathering places. River-related historic resources include structures related to early tourism and industrial development.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment is characterized by continuous rapids.</p>
South Fork Merced River	<p><i>Scientific</i> – These segments of the river corridor constitute a highly significant scientific resource because the watershed is largely within designated Wilderness in Yosemite National Park.</p>
5) Wilderness	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides views from the river and its banks of unique river features, including large pothole pools within slick rock cascades, old growth forest, and meadows.</p> <p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment is characterized by glaciated valleys in the high country and V-shaped canyons above Wawona. Moraine meadows and soda springs above Gravelly Ford are also unique, river-related geologic features.</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment provides outstanding opportunities for river-related solitude, enjoyment of natural river sounds, and primitive and unconfined recreation. This segment of the river is predominantly without trails, with the exception of four bridgeless trail crossings in the upper reaches of the segment.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment includes a nearly full range of riverine environments typical of the Sierra Nevada. Examples of river-related federal and state special-status species include Wawona riffle beetle and mountain yellow-legged frog.</p>

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5) Wilderness (cont.)	<p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment includes river-related prehistoric sites and resources and reflects historic stock use and cavalry activities.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment is characterized by a free-flowing river and excellent water quality.</p>
6) Impoundment (would become part of segment 7 Wawona if an alternative water source were secured and impoundment were removed)	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides views from the river and its banks of the river and Wawona Dome.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment has excellent water quality.</p>
7) Wawona	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides views from the river and its banks of Wawona Dome.</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment offers opportunities to experience a spectrum of river-related recreational activities, from nature study and photography to hiking.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment contains a diversity of river-related species, wetlands, and riparian habitats. There are federal and state special-status species in this segment, including Wawona riffle beetle.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment contains evidence of thousands of years of human occupation, including numerous prehistoric and historic Indian villages, historic sites, structures, and landscape features related to tourism, early Army and National Park Service administration, and homesteading.</p>
8) Below Wawona	<p><i>Scenic</i> – This segment provides views from the river and its banks of continual white-water cascades in the deep and narrow river canyon in a untrailed, undisturbed environment.</p> <p><i>Geologic Processes/Conditions</i> – This segment contains a transition from Paleozoic Era igneous to Cretaceous Period metasedimentary rocks (metasedimentary rocks are among the oldest in the Sierra Nevada).</p> <p><i>Recreation</i> – This segment provides outstanding opportunities for river-related solitude, enjoyment of natural river sounds, and primitive and unconfined recreation in an untrailed, undisturbed environment. River-related recreational opportunities include hiking, fishing, and white-water kayaking.</p> <p><i>Biological</i> – This segment is characterized by diverse riparian areas that are intact and largely undisturbed by humans. River-related federal and state special-status species in this segment include Wawona riffle beetle.</p> <p><i>Cultural</i> – This segment contains archeological sites and historic resources such as trail segments representing early cavalry activity.</p> <p><i>Hydrologic Processes</i> – This segment is characterized by a free-flowing river with continual white-water cascades.</p>